| Department of Public Health and Human Services | Section:
CASE MANAGEMENT |
| FOOD STAMP PROGRAM | Subject:
Case Transfer |

Supersedes: FS 1512-1 (07/01/03)

References: 7 CFR 273.2, 273.3, 273.12, ARM 37.82.101; ARM 37.82.402; ARM 37.78.102 and .221

GENERAL RULE -- Food stamp cases may be transferred from one Montana Office of Public Assistance (OPA) to another. Cases are not transferred from one state to another.

Time frames for sending the hard copy case file and using the Case Record Control (CARC) screen to transfer the case on TEAMS is driven by **quality customer service**. Benefit **issuance must not be delayed** due to lack of prompt administrative action. Cooperation between OPAs is necessary to transfer cases efficiently.

MULTIPLE PROGRAMS

A case open on food stamps along with TANF, and/or a Medicaid program must be managed by the same OPA. The programs' most restrictive policy applies regarding the OPA that will maintain the case. TANF has the most restrictive policy. Medicaid and the Food Stamp Program polices are less restrictive.

SERVICE COUNTY WHEN HOUSEHOLD MOVES

If it is reported/discovered a household moved, the case is transferred to the county of residence. If a residential county is served by more than one county (e.g., Jefferson County is served by Lewis and Clark County and Silver Bow County), the OPA Case Manager chooses one of the two counties to transfer the case unless specified by the household. When the household receives the case transfer notice, it can request a different service county.

AUTHORIZING BENEFITS

When the OPA receives a request for a case to be transferred or is notified of the household moving, the OPA Case Manager determines if any additional information or verification is needed to determine eligibility for the next month's benefit according to the household's reporting requirement.

The case is authorized in one of the following ways according to quality customer service:

1.   If all of the information is provided or can easily and promptly be obtained through either collateral contact or obtaining verification readily available from household, eligibility must be redetermined prior to transferring the case. The sending OPA authorizes the

benefit or closes the case as appropriate <u>based on the new information</u> and sends the appropriate required eligibility and case transfer notices to the household.

2.   If additional information is needed and it is easier for the receiving OPA to gather information, the sending OPA <u>authorizes</u> the benefit for the following month at the <u>current level</u> and transfers the case. In addition to sending a case transfer notice, the sending OPA must also send a notice requesting the necessary information/ verification, if any, be returned to the receiving OPA for eligibility determination.

Information/verification is requested according to the household's reporting requirements.

If time frames allow for adverse action, the receiving OPA may de-authorize the benefit and decrease the benefit amount according to the household's reporting requirement the month of the transfer.

If time frames allow for a supplement, the receiving OPA issues the supplement for the month of the transfer.

SENDING OPA   When a case is transferred to another OPA, the sending OPA:

1.   Reviews the case for accuracy and takes the necessary actions to correct the case.

2.   Sets appropriate alerts for the receiving OPA (e.g., shelter verification due, pending IPV, etc.).

3.   **Purges** the hard copy case file (FS 1510-1) and organizes the file into the standardized case file organization (FS 1511-1).

4.   Transfers (CARC) the case on TEAMS to the receiving OPA to caseload '999'.

5.   Mails the hard copy case file **the same** day as sending the transfer notice and transferring (CARC) the case on TEAMS to the receiving OPA.

RECEIVING OPA   When a case is transferred to another OPA, the receiving OPA:

1.   Assigns the case to the appropriate OPA Case Manager upon receiving the TEAMS alert.

2.   Reviews the case for accuracy and takes all required actions as soon as possible but no later than 10 days of receiving the alert or the case file in the OPA whichever is first.

TRANSFERRING CLOSED CASES

When the effective date of closure has passed, the case cannot be transferred on TEAMS using the CARC screen. When an OPA requests a hard copy file, the hard copy file is provided if it is readily available regardless of how long the case was closed.

When the effective date of closure has not passed, the sending OPA reverts the case to open and transfers the case without authorizing the benefit amount. The receiving OPA determines the next month's benefit amount. Since reverting the case to open is positive action, it is possible benefits may decrease for the transfer month.

MAILING CASE FILE

Purged hard copy case files must be mailed to the correct service OPA.

A six-part classification folder is required to transfer a case file to another OPA. Manila folders cannot be used to transfer a case.

The information for the past year, the most recent application, and all permanent documents must be sent if there is more than one volume for an active case.

Case files are mailed using the U.S. Postal Service:

1.   Send First Class (Standard) or Priority Mail.

2.   Request Delivery Confirmation Service. Generally, there is an additional minimal charge for this service.

3.   Obtain a receipt and a confirmation number.

Delivery Confirmation Service provides confirmation of delivery/ attempted delivery date, if requested. A return receipt is not provided. Inquiry is made by using the confirmation number and calling 1-800-222-1811 or via the Internet (www.usps.com). The voice response states when the package was mailed, when it was delivered, and the address where the package was delivered but does not state who accepted the package.

The OPA may choose to send case files UPS or Federal Express. A process to confirm delivery is required regardless of how the file is mailed.

CORRECTING ERRORS

The service OPA responsible for the case at the time the error occurred must respond to the error and correct the error for the current month and all past months. The new service OPA must be notified when the error is corrected and must follow up with required adjustments, benefit reductions, supplements, or closures as necessary.

If the receiving OPA identifies an error for the transfer month or prior months, the service OPA at the time the error occurred must correct the error for the current month and all past months. **In order to expedite the process the two OPAs must work together using the CARC screen on TEAMS to transfer the case back and forth as appropriate.** Generally, it is not needed to send the hard copy case file.

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